

MAINTAIN THE LANDSCAPE

Properly maintaining your plants and irrigation system will keep your plants healthy, conserve water and provide you with a beautiful and lasting landscape.

PLANT MAINTENANCE

All types of landscapes require some maintenance. Regularly attending to these gardening tasks will keep your plants healthy and vigorous.

- **WEED CONTROL:** Since weeds compete with desirable plants for nutrients, sunlight and moisture, they must be controlled. In addition to physically removing weeds, you can also use landscape fabric and/or mulch, pre-emergents, herbicides or organic alternatives.
- **PEST AND DISEASE CONTROL:** The best way to fight pest or disease problems is prevention. Pests and disease can be controlled by including plants adapted to the climate, maintaining optimal plant health by proper fertilizing and watering, keeping the landscape free of plant debris and regularly inspecting plants for problems.
- **CONTROLLING PLANT GROWTH:** Occasionally you will need to control the growth of your landscape plants by pruning, dividing, deadheading or pinching. These activities will maintain your plants health, vigor and appearance by stimulating or re-directing their growth.
- **FERTILIZATION:** To understand your plants' needs, it is critical to know the habitat your plants are adapted to. Some plants require lean soil, while others require nutrient-rich soil. In most cases, amending soils with composted organic matter before planting will improve the fertility of the soil.

SPRINKLER SYSTEM

Follow these steps to start up your sprinkler system at the beginning of the growing season:

- Inspect the sprinkler system by checking sprinkler heads, valves, filter screens and nozzles.
- Manually turn on the system and flush out dirt and debris by removing the last sprinkler head in each line.



Allow water to run for a few minutes.

- Replace the head and observe the spray patterns and the positions of the sprinklers. Adjust them as necessary.
- Clean and replace any built-in filter screens. Watch for leaks and any pressure problems.
- Make the needed repairs and adjustments to the system in order to apply water as evenly as possible.

DRIP SYSTEM

Examine the filter and clean or replace it, if necessary. Manually turn on the system. Open the flush cap or ball valve to flush out any dirt or debris. Examine the tubing for breaks or cracks and to see if it is pinched or separated from the fittings. Replace, straighten or tighten tubing as needed. Examine the emitters and replace any that are missing, clogged or broken.

- **WINTERIZATION:** To winterize your irrigation system, the water must be drained out. Depending on your system, you may have drain valves that can be opened, or you may have to blow out your system using compressed air. You may wish to hire an irrigation professional to perform this task.

IRRIGATION SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

IRRIGATION CONTROLLER:

To make spring start-up quick and easy, become familiar with how to run the controller. Clean it, change the battery and check the

wiring for any loose connections. Set up an irrigation schedule and regularly adapt the schedule throughout the growing season based on your plants' needs.



A WATER CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROJECT